

Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association

Zoom Meeting Minutes, September 21, 2022

Facilitator: Dave Petrozzi

Secretary: Nadine Fiedler

Board members present: Nadine Fiedler, John Laursen, Paul Leistner, Brian Mitchell, David Petrozzi, Jim Pierce, Bing Wong

Other attendees: Jason Anderson, Alex Arell, Dan Barnhardt, Joe Carter, Vicente Harrison, Ed Hershey, Janice Hogue, Lisa JH, Debra Monzon, Nancy McDade, Ute Munger, John Paisley, Midge Pierce, Rick Sany, Julie Scherr, Dawn Smallman, Katelyn Wheatley

After introductions, the August meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Bing Wong reported a bank balance of \$5,865.62. Liabilities include monthly Zoom fees.

Neighbor Meet-Up

The neighbor meet-up is set for Saturday, October 1, 1-4 p.m., on the back lawn of Western Seminary. The original intention was to target new neighbors, but that has changed to focus on all neighbors. Julie Scherr has designed a flyer for it and will be posting it around the neighborhood. Paul Leistner moved that MTNA donate \$50 for name tags and Sharpies and other needs, and unused money can be given back. Dave Petrozzi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mt. Tabor Arsons Update

Special guests were Jason Alexander, senior fire and arson investigator for the fire department; Vicente Harrison, health and safety manager for the parks department; and Alex Arrell, swing shift supervisor for parks security.

Jason Alexander reported that the incidents of arson in Mt. Tabor Park is an evolving case, taking lots of time and energy. Search warrants have been issued, and his office is preparing the case to present to the district attorney. A grand jury will convene next week. Alex Arrell noted that they have sent out exclusions for people who might have been involved in the arsons.

Vicente Harrison said that they are continuing with enhanced patrols in the park, and that they will elevate concerns to the fire department. They are repairing locks on gates, which should be complete next week save for one gate that still needs repair.

Midge Pierce asked how many rangers there are in the park. Alex said there are five, with one working at night, and they are telling unpermitted gatherings in the park about how to get permits. Midge asked if they can put up signs, and Alex said it's better to not oversign the park. Julie Scherr said it's unclear how to obtain a permit and that a sign would be helpful. Alex responded that when people want information they go online, but he will talk to his supervisors about ways to share that information. Bing Wong said that the large groups that gather to dance, etc., know they're unpermitted but gather anyway, and wonders about potential vandalism to signs and if there is a budget for sign repair or replacement. Vicente said there is a budget for that.

Bing Wong asked if ParkScan reports are forwarded to the water bureau. Alex said not now, but they will, and PDXReporter does get forwarded. Midge asked if the suspect who was released could be re-arrested if new evidence is found. Jason said that if a subject is released the grand jury must decide if the burden of proof has been met to rearrest, including for other fires not in the park, and that the release has given them time to prepare for the grand jury. They are identifying victims and seeing if they'll testify, and Vicente is figuring out the cost to the park of the damages.

Midge Pierce asked if it would be helpful for firefighting if the reservoirs were full and helicopters could use the water. Jason said that helicopters are not used in urban areas, and that there are many water resources available. Vicente underscored that the fire department is well equipped, and mentioned a fire they had put out deep in Forest Park using their extra-long hoses.

Tar and Trail Races

Bing Wong reported that the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park's Tar and Trail Races will be held October 30. He is working with the parks department to get insurance. They don't need MTNA sponsorship this year but need MTNA to be aware of the event.

Other Neighbor Announcements and Concerns

Ed Hershey said that the most important issue facing Portlanders is the city charter change, and he hopes we can get it on the October agenda. The change will influence how neighbors will be represented. Jim Pierce agreed that it should be on the agenda and said that the Richmond NA had a pro/con discussion about it. Midge Pierce wants to reach out to the two people who spoke to Richmond and see if they can attend the October meeting. She made a motion to do so, and John Laursen seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Paul Leistner reflected on the new neighbor meetup and hopes we can get a better handle on communications. He proposed a communications committee, with a work group formed to start that will come back to MTNA with its recommendations. Paul will reach out to those who are interested.

Paul thinks MTNA should look into becoming our own 501c3. Right now we are federally tax exempt only through SEUL sponsorship. John likes the idea of MTNA controlling its own funds. Jim asked if other NAs are considering this and wonders if we can join forces. Bing is unwilling to do the extra work required to make this happen. Paul said that other NAs have become 501c3s; he wants to explore that and get back to the group. Midge says this is a serious and significant proposal and asked if we should address it in a retreat with other NAs of similar minds. John sees no downside, especially since we have no representative to SEUL; he wonders what would happen to our insurance through SEUL. He sees the value of a consortium.

John Laursen talked about the International Day of Peace event that happened earlier today, with an MTNA table staffed by John, Paul Leistner, and Bing Wong. A group of people from other neighborhoods had previously volunteered their time to spruce up the Mt. Tabor neighborhood entryway on Hawthorne and 50th. Several groups chipped in \$200 toward barkdust, and John moved that the MTNA also donate that amount. Paul seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. John suggested that the funds could come from the Gateway fiscal sponsorship account at SE Uplift.

Debra Monzon, spokesperson for the Thorburn St. Safety Alliance, reported that there are funds left in their account for a mini-project, and talked about using those funds at the intersection of Thorburn and Pine, where there is a section set off by candlestick delineators. One idea is to put planters there in this extended shoulder, with plants supplied by Portland Nursery's community outreach. Ed Hershey wondered why the extended shoulder was necessary, and Debra replied that it had been a very unsafe area for pedestrians. Paul Leistner said that Debra has done a textbook job as a community organizer, and that MTNA has provided value to her project with our support.

Bing Wong talked about how some MTNA people have done community outreach through tabling at events, and how he has the equipment for these tables. Paul is collecting materials from other NAs about how they do community outreach. While John, Paul, and Bing tabled for the MTNA at the Seventh Day Adventist Church Community Fun Day, they heard about neighbor interests in neighborhood history, safety, research into house history, and more. He says that these events are a great entry for people to learn about the city and amplify their power, and how it's all about connections.

Friends of Mt. Tabor Park Report

Bing Wong reported that the FMTP forwarded reports of fires in Mt. Tabor Park to Portland Fire & Rescue. The board asked that they not be shared on social media for copycat concerns. That all changed after KOIN 6 did a news story.

Park staffer Vince Moore, east zone parks maintenance supervisor, attended the FMTP picnic and told Bing that an MTNA letter of concern about the needed repairs to broken gates should be sent to parks staffer Don Athey.

The next Weed Warrior work party will be on Saturday September 24, 9 a.m.-noon. A special Weed Warrior work party with the Nature Conservancy will be held on Saturday, Oct. 1, limited to 70 volunteers. Visit taborfriends.org for more on the Urban Nature Series. Mt. Tabor Tar and Trail is on Sunday, Oct. 30. Insurance was secured, and notification to MTNA is all that is required by Portland Parks & Recreation.